ATTITUDE OF PARENTS TOWARDS THE CAREER CHOICE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AKOKO-EDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER PAGE.................................................................i
TITLE PAGE..............................................................ii
CERTIFICATION..........................................................iii
DEDICATION..............................................................iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS....................................................v
TABLE OF CONTENTS................................................vii
LIST OF TABLES..........................................................x
LIST OF FIGURES........................................................xi
ABSTRACT.................................................................xii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study ................................................1
Statement of the Problem ..............................................4
Research Questions.....................................................5
Research Hypotheses...................................................6
Purpose of the Study.....................................................7
Significance of the Study...............................................7
Scope/Delimitation of the Study....................................8
Operational Definition of Terms ....................................9

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.
Concept of Attitude..................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Concept of Career Choice.......................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
PROJECT CODE: 000296

Attitude of Parents towards Career Choice of Students based on Occupation.................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Attitude of Parents towards Career Choice of Students based on Educational Level ..................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Gender as a Correlate to the Attitude of Parents towards the Career Choice of Secondary School Students ...............Error! Bookmark not defined.
The Attitude of Parents towards the Career Choice of Secondary School Students based on Age......................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appraisal of Reviewed Literature..........................Error! Bookmark not defined.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES
Research Design ..................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Population of the Study .............................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Sample and Sampling Techniques..........................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Research Instrument .............................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Validity of the Instrument.................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Reliability of the Instrument.................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Method of Data Collection ......................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Method of Data Analysis .......................................Error! Bookmark not defined.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS
Presentation and Frequency Analysis of Data............ Error! Bookmark not defined.
Testing of Hypotheses .............................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Discussion of Results............................................

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary........................................................
Findings ........................................................
Conclusion ....................................................
Recommendations.............................................
Suggestions for Further Studies............................
Limitations of the Study ..................................
REFERENCES ..............................................
APPENDIX I ................................................
APPENDIX II ................................................
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Analysis of respondents by occupation..............................52
Table 2: Analysis of Respondents based on Gender............................54
Table 3: Analysis of Respondents by educational level......................56
Table 4: Analysis of respondents by age.......................................58
Table 5: Analysis the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on occupation..................60
Table 6: Mean analysis of the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of their children based on gender.................................61
Table 7: Analysis of the relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on educational level.............................................62
Table 8: Analysis of the relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of their children based on age...........63
Table 9: Chi-Square Analysis of the relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on occupation..............................................65
Table 10: Chi-square analysis of the relationship between attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on gender......................................................66
PROJECT CODE: 000296

Table 11: Spearman Correlation Coefficient table showing the relationship between the attitudes of career choice of secondary school students based on education level. .................................68

Table 12: Spearman Correlation Coefficient table showing the relationship between the attitudes of career choice of secondary school students based on Age. ..................................................69
LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 1: Distribution of respondents by occupation .......................... 53
Fig 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender ............................... 55
Fig 3: Distribution of respondents by Educational Level ................. 57
Fig 4: Distribution of respondents by age .................................... 59
ABSTRACT

This research investigated the attitude of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. Four (4) research questions and four (4) hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey study design. One hundred (100) parents were selected from the population to make the sample for the study. A self-structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection, a Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test conducted on the parental attitude scale shows a high level of internal consistency, this is based on a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.746, a greater reliability coefficient compared to 0.5 reliability coefficient. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, Chi-square was used to test the first and second hypotheses while Spearman Rank was used to test the third and fourth hypotheses. The result from the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on occupation and gender. It also show no significant relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of their children based on educational level and age. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that effective guidance and counselling services unit should be established in secondary schools with qualified guidance-counsellors to help students handle social, psychological, occupational and academic challenges meaningfully. Such
services would enable the students to concentrate on studies with hope and confidence.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Education is universally recognized as the answer to socio-economic problems of the world. Nations and individuals look up to education to provide a cure for poverty, ignorance, drought, excessive rainfall, mental deficiency, joblessness, bad government, poor communication system, hunger and inadequate shelter among other things. Every nation of the world aspires toward quality of life and social status. Career selection is one of many important choices students will make in determining future plans. This decision will impart them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student want to do with their life-long work. The choice of career has been a serious problem among the secondary school students in Nigeria. No matter what one’s age is, the choice of career or desire is an important question for everybody. A lot of students in secondary schools believe that their future is a glorious adventures in which they are bound to succeed. Many of them have the idea that they would be able to work in the public or private establishments as soon as they complete secondary school education. Some have planned to become lawyers, engineers, medical doctors, accountants and so on. Students in secondary schools like many other young adults
are always worried about what they will do with their lives, the kind of adult they will become.

Choosing a career is often considered a major turning point in a young adult's life. This decision alone has the potential to open the door for success or close the door of opportunity. While often perceived to be an individual choice, research suggests that a variety of influences such as family, school, community, and social and economic factors are likely to manipulate one's ultimate career decision (Ferry, 2006). Among these factors, students report that parents have the greatest influence on which career they choose (Kniveton, 2004).

Few parents seem to recognize this impact and still believe that they have little to do with the career choices of their children (Taylor, Harris, & Taylor, 2004). In a study from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (Taylor, Harris, & Taylor, 2004), almost half of freshman parents stated that they believed they should remain neutral in regard to their child's career development. However, additional studies show that parents have a greater influence than teachers on career choice (Kniveton, 2004) and can even influence what major their children choose to pursue in college (Simpson, 2003). It is clear that parents believe they have less influence over their children's career decisions than the research supports. This perception seems to differ
from the perception of children, who often report their parents to be of the highest influence (Ferry, 2006; Kniveton, 2004).

While parents assume that their direct career advice may be influential, they may be unaware that they can also exert a strong career influence simply by serving as examples of workers (Kniveton, 2004). In fact, children as young as five years old begin to identify with the occupation of their mother or father (Havighurst, 2004). Parents start influencing career decisions as soon as their children can pronounce their job title.

Parents have different expectations and perceptions about their children. Parents’ perception is formed by number of factors over the period of time. Those factors which shape parent’s perceptions are demographic that is age, gender, income, occupation, education, language, and psychographic that is attitudes, values, personality and interests. What majority of parents perceive their children to get education is for economic gains and one’s own wellbeing.

Those parents who have low income or meager sources of earning, they wish their children to get education and earn much in order to improve standard of living. It is harsh reality that very small numbers of parents wish their children to get education for learning purpose. The common perception of parents about their children education is “more you learn, more you earn” very few parents think of
education as a source to bring change in society and improve overall morale of society. Numerous factors shape parents perception regarding children’s career choice which ultimately influences the children’s career choice. Parents with different demographic and psychographic characteristics have different expectations for the career choice of their children.

Haq (2011) states that attitudes and behaviors that children adopt toward work are largely a result of parents’ encouragement and influence. This then affects what children think, say, and perceive about various careers. Most parents want their children to work for economic gain. Parental involvement in their children's education and choice of career has gained momentum recently and has been a concern of education policy makers. Hence, plenty of researches have been done in this regard at national and international level but it is matter of fact that very few focuses the insights of parents perception but only few has actually focus on the attitudes to parents. This research is aimed to investigate the attitude of parents towards career choice of secondary school students in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of career choice among secondary school students has generated a lot of questions and answers among scholars. The problem has been a delicate issue
that has to be approached with caution. Career choice tends to be a persistent problem for students in the contemporary society. That is why it is not uncommon for students to get into occupations that are not quite suitable to their abilities. Parental background on the other hand tends to be the single most influential factor in students career choice.

More often than not, parents owing to personal idiosyncrasies pressure their wards into taking up family occupations and other careers even when they do not possess requisite abilities. What usually obtain in the end are job dissatisfaction, underperformance if not complete malfunction, frustration and inefficiency all of which translate in the long run to national economic crisis. Therefore, this study investigates the attitude of parents towards career choice of secondary school students in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions has been raised to guide the study:

i. What is the relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on occupation?

ii. What is the relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on gender?
iii. What is the relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on educational level?

iv. What is the relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on age?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses has been formulated to guide the study:

i. There is no significant relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on occupation

ii. There is no significant relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on gender

iii. There is no significant relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on educational level

iv. There is no significant relationship between the attitudes of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on age
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitude of parents towards career choice of secondary school students in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. Specifically, the study will address the following:

i. Occupation as a correlate to the attitude of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students

ii. Gender as a correlate to the attitude of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students

iii. The attitude of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on educational level

iv. The attitude of parents towards the career choice of secondary school students based on age

Significance of the Study

This study will be very useful to students, parents, school administrators, guidance counsellors and educational policy makers. This study is significant in that it would expose the influence of parental attitudes on the career choice of secondary school students wherefore students could be helped to make realistic occupational choices.
From the findings of this study parents would, through PTAs (Parents-Teachers Associations), be dissuaded from compelling their children into taking up occupations that are not at par with their personal characteristics and abilities. This study will also impart on school administrators in that, it will expose them to one of the important variable (parents’ attitude) in the career choice of secondary school students which will help them in making administrative choices and plans towards ensuring a balance between the parents and their children.

Guidance counsellors will also benefit from the findings of the study since they will be guided on programmes to organize during career day so that the students could be helped in making appropriate career choices. Furthermore, educational policy makers will benefit from the study in that it will expose them to those factors that is responsible for the career choice of students in secondary schools, thereby guiding them on areas to focus on when making educational policies.

Scope/Delimitation of the Study

This study will focus on the attitude of parents towards career choice of secondary school students. The study is limited to Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State.
Operational Definition of Terms

**Attitude:** This is an expression of favour or disfavour toward a person, place, thing, or event

**Parents:** This is a person acting as a father, mother or guardian

**Career Choice:** This is the broad opportunities that exist for lifelong vocations. These vocations are set out in a framework of strategies moving toward personal goals.

**Secondary School:** This is a school which provides secondary education, between the ages of 11 and 16 or 11 and 19, after primary school and before higher education.

**Student:** This is a learner, or who attends an educational institution
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